THE GIRLS OF BOURTON

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"The common, lying within easy access of the whole village." *p.* 146.

CHAPTER I.

BOURTON AND ITS GIRLS.

Bourton was a breezy village, with a wide, waste common, conveniently situated on the outskirts of a great town. The word "conveniently" is used advisedly in reference to more than shopping, or even charing, or as a place of work for the men of the village. Indeed, the men of Bourton had singularly little to do with St. Ambrose's, the large university and market town in their immediate neighbourhood. One or two of the more prosperous—the upper ten, as it were—tramped the two and a half intervening miles twice daily, and figured in St. Ambrose's, not as scouts in the colleges, or as lodging-house keepers—these posts were for the natives of St. Ambrose's—but as porters at the railway-station, or salesmen in shops, or artisans, just as their young daughters found their way to the same goal, and were employed as shopwomen or dressmakers' and milliners' "hands." But these represented the fine sprinkling of aristocracy in Bourton.

The Bourton men in general were hereditary bricklayers, day-labourers, and jobbing-gardeners, diversified by the smallest (socially) of small shopkeepers of shops of all wares, and one or two ale-house keepers. They were the modern hewers of wood and drawers of water for their fellows, untrained, unskilled workers for men of greater capabilities and better opportunities, who had broken their bonds and risen to be master-masons, dairy-farmers, or nurserymen in the vicinity. The ordinary Bourton man of the former description was paid off as a little-worth encumbrance every time work was slack, and remained, as a rule, out of work for three or four months in the year. The small shopkeepers, whose books contained no end of long-standing debts, were always on the verge of bankruptcy, frequently slipping over the verge. The very ale-house keepers did not flourish.

Poverty was perennial in Bourton—that is, the summer's work and wages barely served to pay off the winter's debts in addition to maintaining the different households, leaving them to fall back into fresh debt the moment the autumn rains and the winter frost and snow came again. The worst of it was that this state of things had become habitual with the people, and did not weigh on their minds. Certainly it did not impel them to take any step towards improving their position by the village lads quitting the village for some more favourable locality, or even emigrating at the expense of enterprising emigration societies.

There was something strange and pitiful in the apathy of the Bourton men, brought into tolerably close and constant contact, as they were, with the working-men of St. Ambrose's, who were busy and active in a hundred ways, and, in spite of bad years with the university and depression in the arts as well as in trade, were, on the average, fairly well employed and well-to-do.

Even the best friends of Bourton—its clergy, the lord of the manor, the charitable residents in the country-houses round, and the few villagers who had shaken off the spell of hopeless indifference and sluggish content with the lowest achievements—were apt, in their struggles to relieve and elevate the community, to become infected with the listless supineness, the kind of philosophic despair which possessed the place as far as this world was concerned; so that to bear submissively the day's dreary burden of debt and hardship in winter, to snatch at any passing pleasure by way of compensation in summer, and to trust vaguely, where souls were reverent, that it would all be made right some day, somehow, in a better world, were about the highest gains which could be aimed at.

The women were the chief props, not to say the ornamental pillars, of the village. They were hereditary washerwomen, as the bulk of the men were hereditary day-labourers, etc., etc. The pure air, the abundant springs of water, the wide common, of which only sections were given up to haystacks, geese, and donkeys, and the main portion consisted of stretches of short, daisy-sprinkled turf, running into boggy, fenny corners, and broken up by occasional hillocks crowned with furze and gorse—the entire features of the scene combined with the vicinity of St. Ambrose's and its colleges to point out the women's calling and shut them up to it. And, as washing was more remunerative and, in spite of college vacations, a less fluctuating employment than bricklaying or digging, the women of Bourton filled the family purses and, to a large extent, held their strings.

It was characteristic of the village and of the spirit which pervaded it that there was no large laundry—not even a cluster of thriving minor laundries. The women washed independently or in little groups of a family character, represented by a mother and her daughters, sisters and sisters-in-law, or an aunt with her nieces; sometimes the groups exhibited specimens of three generations. The women washed in their own houses or in adjoining outhouses; each dwelling being liable to be pervaded with the steam of the bread-winning. The Bourton laundresses had no special aids and appliances to lighten their labour and bring it to a triumphant conclusion beyond their common, or fine natural drying-ground, free to all.

A Bourton girl was born to the washing-tub, just as a St. Ambrose's girl was born to a maid-servant's situation, or to a place in a restaurant, or to a sewing-machine in one of the upper rooms above the linendrapers' large establishments. After all, the washing-tub was not so bad an inheritance, while at Bourton it was at once more independent and safer than some others.

Many of the Bourton washerwomen, whether old or young, matrons or maidens, were amongst the most modest, diligent, and fairly intelligent women of their nurture and generation. It is true that, as physical strength was required for the occupation, the consciousness of the strength and the power it wielded had a tendency to produce riotous rudeness of tone and bearing among the young and thoughtless; so that, till the washergirl had been subdued by experience and the trials of life, she was frequently more distinguished by uncompromising vigour than by the least suspicion of refinement. She was liable to fail in her respect to her elders and social superiors, while among her contemporaries she was decidedly plain-spoken, bouncing, and quarrelsome on provocation. Yet this, too, was a frame of mind which, so long as it remained honest and upright, must be far less regrettable, not to say terrible, than many which present themselves in this frail and fallen world.

Bourton showed chiefly long rows of red-tiled or grey and olive thatched houses, with small gardens in front and larger gardens behind, the common lying within easy access of the whole village. In the mornings the women might be seen sallying forth from their house-doors to collect in the back-kitchens and washing-places; occasionally, when the weather was oppressive and the steam sometimes next to suffocating even to the chilliest, leanest, most withered of the veteran washerwomen, they met in such gardens as were handy for the arrangement, with the tubs set in the shade of the straggling apple-trees on the little grass-plots between the rank and file of rasp and gooseberry bushes.

The scene was not so picturesque as the same employment can look when it is pursued by French women, in tall Norman caps and long gold earrings, beating and dipping their linen in the flood of their great rivers from rafts lying along the banks; or by Berne women, in white habit shirts and laced bodices, cheerfully scrubbing their dirty linen in public from one of the foot-bridges which cross the tributary of the Aar that runs down the main street; or by Scotch Highland women, with bare feet, but heads screened by tartan plaids, who have great kettles boiling, gipsy-fashion, on small piles of burning peats and sticks, among the rowans and birches at the side of the brook rushing past the turf-built clachan. The English women, even the youngest of them, were not only less picturesque; they were not the trimmest and neatest of working maidens and matrons. The nature of the task required the sleeves of gowns and jackets to be rolled up to the elbows, the skirts to be protected by canvas aprons, and asked that a liberal allowance should be made for towselled hair and disordered caps pushed back and ruffled in the heat of action. There was none of the half-holiday air and the little coquetries of costume which belonged to the old harvest-fields before the days of reaping-machines, when, in the midst of heavy toil, the young women at least still treated the season as the festival of the year. To be sure, the harvest-field supplied manly young binders to tie up and stack what the women reaped. But the washing-tubs were innocent of the masculine element, unless in the case of silly Joey Hemming, the discharged soldier. His careworn wife could not trust him with the children and the cooking in the kitchen; she was fain to plant him, at intervals, at her washing-tub, though his performance was chiefly remarkable for the mode in which he relieved his drudgery. "When I gets overcome with a-rubbing of the soles of the socks, and with the hot water and the suds," Joey would explain, "I just sits down o' the edge o' the tub and haves a lemon, promiscuous like, since my missus will not allow me a bit of baccy or a tidy pipe lest it go for to smell them plaguey fallals of surplices and ladies' gownds."

Still the Bourton washerwomen had their advantages, while there was nothing essentially lowering or unwholesome in their avocation. It turned out girls well-developed and robust physically, when there was no constitutional tendency to asthma—creatures of vigorous mental fibre, notably true, and not unwomanly, in spite of the dash of the amazon in them.

What solid gossip and unsubstantial chatter hummed round the Bourton washing-tubs! How the news of the

parish, family affairs, and personal concerns were discussed with the greatest impartiality!

There were several centres of animated conversation going on in Widow Field's washing-place one fine morning in May. Indeed, there were as many centres as there were tubs, and Widow Field had as good as half-a-dozen in use, for she was a woman of successful enterprise and industry.

There were different topics of discussion suited to the different tubs, for there were tubs of elderly women, married and single wearing little plaid shawls, crossed in front and knotted behind, though the month was May, as well as canvas aprons, twisted round the waist, and, as often as not, rusty bonnets surmounting matronly caps. There were also tubs of trustworthy girls, just as at an aristocratic ball or flower-show there are benches of chaperons and clusters of girls in the conservatory or the rose tent.

At the principal senior tub the attraction of the audience was monopolised by the tale of a Mrs. Jones. She was describing with lavish detail and mournful emphasis to highly appreciative listeners the terms on which she did washing for the family of a linendraper in St. Ambrose's, and was paid in kind on the truck system—so much washing for a pair of blankets, calico for her girls' frocks and fustian for her master's jackets. The system was liable to abuse in the hands of an unscrupulous tradesman, who made no bones of charging double for his inferior goods, and poor Mrs. Jones strongly suspected, but did not dare to accuse, her employer of dishonest practices. She rather took blame to herself, for the burden of her tale was her regret at having entered into such a bad bargain. "I done it," she repeated, with mournful self-reproach, "and there is nobody to blame 'cept me; I were that stupid and green for my years that, knowing how hard it was to get clothes and bedding for a family, and my master stiff with the rheumatics, and the best blanket his granny's, and like a riddle with holes, I fair jumped at the offer. Was I to think that Miss Prideful, Cox's sixteen-years-old daughter, would want two starched cotton gownds every week, and her mother, as served in Patch, the ironmonger's shop, backing her? while, as for petticoats for the missus, and light waistcoats for Cox's self, and handkerchers, I could not count them with my ten fingers! But I done it without stopping to think or ask advice, so I mun suffer for it."

"Still, it do be cruel hard on you, Mrs. Jones," chimed in several feeling voices, "and you none so young and strong as you were once, and thinking no ill when you made the bargain."

In the girls' ring the eager talk turned on the Bourton feast which was celebrated in the Lime Meadow, on the longest day of June, on Nance Coppock's marriage, and on marriage in the abstract.

The most conspicuous holders forth on these exciting themes were Kitty Coppock—Coppock was a common name in the village, and Nance and Kitty were far-away cousins—and Milly or Milcah Smith—the Christian name in this case being a survival of one of the quaint Biblical names which had formerly abounded in the neighbourhood. But fashion had changed, and the fancy for reproducing old Saxon and Norman names had spread even to Bourton. The register of later years was full of Ediths and Winifreds, Mauds and Ethels, soon familiarised into Edies and Wins, etc.

Kitty Coppock was naturally lively and loquacious—a pretty, slender girl, who derived an amount of satisfaction from her "genteel figure," about equal to that she received from her blue, slightly saucer eyes, and fair, freckled complexion.

Milly was not ordinarily talkative any more than she was pretty. She was a stoutly-made young woman, with a somewhat heavy, highly-coloured face, relieved by the honest straightforward look in the hazel eyes and the good-humoured lines of the full mouth. She was Widow Field's eldest granddaughter, who stayed with the grandmother and undertook the household work of the establishment, in addition to her share of the washing. The position was honourable but difficult, since Widow Field, with all her virtues, was understood to have a temper, and to be, as somebody said, "petikularity itself." Milly filled it fairly, and was enough of a favourite with her companions for them to forgive her the arbitrary distinction of her lot. At present she was carried away by the enthralling nature of the subject on her tongue, and by some accidental opportunity she had enjoyed of hearing more details of the great event than the other girls had commanded.

Till this very week Nance had been one of the younger band engaged at Widow Field's. Now she had withdrawn into brief retirement, to emerge into the glory of her wedding-day, when the vicar, and not the curate, was to marry her; little Miss Lucy, the vicar's daughter, whom Nance had helped to nurse before she was big enough to aim at being a washerwoman, was to be her best maid; and the bride, with her sister Tabby, and Ned Freeling, the bridegroom, with his mate Ben Harris, were to go all the way to Bristol and back as an outing after the ceremony.

"I wonder at Nance—there!" said Kitty, with a toss of her whole figure and a flourish of her hands, wonderfully small and shapely for her condition of life, and still only a little drawn and bleached by her trade. The inadvertent movement sent the soap-suds flying in a small shower over her companions.

They returned the dubious compliment without stint, till Kitty was fain to duck her head and cry for quarter. "My! if my eyes ain't smarting worse than my chapped knuckles in winter," she protested.

Then the other girls remonstrated in their turn. Why should Kitty wonder at Nance, who was marrying the young man with whom she had kept company—going on for three years, and he had been all that time working for Farmer Bryce, which was not a bad sign of Ned.

"Tut!" cried Kitty, disdainfully, "I shouldn't mind holding all his savings between my finger and my thumb. Two-and-sixpence a week all the rent for their couple of holes of rooms, and half of their sticks of furniture lent by Nance's mother!"

"But oughtn't they to begin as they mean to end—plain and simple? and if they do get on, why it is easy to find bigger rooms and a bigger rent," urged Milly.

"I'll bet you my black hen, which Tom Peters pretends as he reared for me, that she'll be back washing here before three months is over," insisted Kitty.

"And why not?" asked Milly, innocently, "if so be her husband can spare her. He has been helping his mother to pay the expenses of his father's last illness and burial—that is where his spare money has gone, poor chap. That is what it is. And why shouldn't Nance come here and wash so long as she is alone in the house, with her husband getting his dinner, to save time, at Seven Trees Farm? I am sure it would be less lonesome and tiresome washing here with the rest, as she was used to, than sitting counting her fingers in her new house. She cannot be always cleaning it, and she cannot take in dress-making, like her sister Tabby does, because Nance was not bred, not to no other trade than the washing—besides her mother has no need of her."

"What!" cried Kitty, with still greater shrillness and show of scorn—"go on washing after she is a married woman and a man's slave, anyhow? That would be a sell and a pretty ending."

A murmur went through the group, half of admiration, half of doubt with regard to the high ground Kitty was taking.

"What do you mean?" again inquired the puzzled, matter-of-fact Milly. "There are lots of married women, not to say widow women, as good as many of us and better, as have washed for granny, and are washing for her at this present moment. There are scores and scores in Bourton as are bound to, so long as they live and can move about, and when I come to think of it, Kitty, I wish you would speak lower, lest some of them hear you."

"Hearkeners never hear good tales of themselves," retorted Kitty, "and these hearkeners have carried their hogs to a poor market, Milly Smith. They are just a set of mean-spirited ninnies of old women, though mother is one of them, or they would never have worked to keep their houses going and fill the mouths of their lazy men and squalling brats. I would like to see me work for any man and his bairns! It would be a bold lad as asked me to."

"But they would be your bairns, too," objected Milly, naturally.

"Well," Kitty made the concession, "I would cook their meals and his, and wash and dress the lads and lasses, and get them up and put them to bed again, and keep their clothes tidy; and I'd go and do the marketing—that would be a bit of fun—but not another hand's turn would I do. Bourton ways ain't for me, I tell you, not if I knows it. Where's the good of marrying if it's not to get a man to work for you?"

As there is always a revolutionary spirit abroad, particularly in the rising generation, this view of the matter recommended itself to not a few of the Bourton girls, in spite of some dissenting voices, and sundry fragmentary hints about the obligation of lending a hand when it was wanted, and what if the master fell ill? There were also one or two sly suggestions that if there were heaps of children—and Bourton was rather famous for large families—and they happened to be of a wild habit or a divining turn, the wife and mother might still have the heavier end of the string, though she had made a bargain and stuck to it to do no more than keep house for her master and rear their children

"They met in such gardens as were handy."

(To be continued.)

Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.—*Carlyle.*

JOANNA BAILLIE.

BY MRS. HENRY FAWCETT.

MRS. JOANNA BAILLIE, as she was usually called, because, though she was never married, her age and literary reputation were held to entitle her to brevet rank, was a remarkable instance of a writer rapidly rising to the highest pinnacle of fame, and then as rapidly and surely descending almost to the common level of ordinary mortals. But the Scotch woman, with the blood of heroes in her veins, showed herself worthy of her descent, both by the modesty and dignity with which she bore her fame, and by the sweetness and unassuming simplicity with which she bore the loss of it. She was descended from Sir William Wallace, and the fame of this long-past ancestor is perhaps equalled by that of another and a much nearer relative. John Hunter, the great anatomist and physiologist, the founder of the College of Surgeons, was her mother's brother. She therefore might truly feel, not in a figurative sense, that in everything she was "sprung of earth's first blood"; and her double connection with the best and greatest of the heroes of Scotland was probably not without its influence on the development of her mind and character.

She was born at Bothwell, near Glasgow, on the banks of the Clyde, in 1762. In a poem addressed, near the close of her life, to her sister Agnes, she recalls how they had as children—

> ". . . . . paddled barefoot side by side,
> Among the sunny shallows of the Clyde."

Her father was a minister of the Scotch Church, and afterwards a Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. His death in 1778, and the establishment of his son Matthew in the medical profession in London, caused Mrs. Baillie and her daughters, Joanna and Agnes, to remove there in 1784; and in London practically the rest of the future poetess's long life was spent. Her first work was a volume of verse published anonymously in 1790. The first of her series of dramas, called "Plays on the Passions," was published in 1798. These were also published without the author's name. They made an immediate and very widespread impression; and their author was frequently, and by the very best judges, lauded as being equal, if not superior, to Shakespeare. The idea of these dramas, and of those in the successive volumes which appeared in 1802 and 1812, was to delineate a single dominant passion, such as hatred, envy, etc.; and each of the passions thus treated was made the subject first of a tragedy, then of a comedy. The language employed is easy, dignified, and simple: and it is probable that the contrast Joanna Baillie's dramas afforded in this respect to the dramas of the generation closing with the death of Dr. Johnson, was the reason of the great hold which they at once obtained upon the public mind. It is not easy in any other way to account for their extraordinary popularity. The time in which Joanna Baillie lived was one marked by a literary revolution, in which the formal, stilted, and didactic manner was overthrown, and poets and great writers sought to express their thoughts in simple and natural language. The leaders of this literary revolution were Wordsworth and Coleridge. But in the great movement identified with their names Joanna Baillie bore a humbler, but a useful and effective part.

When Joanna Baillie's first volume of plays appeared, there was much speculation as to their possible authorship. Samuel Rogers, the banker, poet, and critic, thought that they were written by a man. It seems to have been difficult, at the end of the last century, for the great judges in the literary world to conceive that a poem, worthy of praise, could be of female authorship. Even so late as 1841, a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, writing upon Joanna Baillie's poetical works, puts the coping-stone upon the praise which he bestows upon her style and diction by saying that they are "masculine." He says, "Let us again express our admiration of the wonderful elasticity and *masculine* force of mind exhibited in this vast collection of dramas;" and in another place the writer says, "The spirit breathing everywhere is a spirit of *manly* purity and moral uprightness." We should say, at the present day, that there is certainly force of mind in Joanna Baillie's dramas, but that it is feminine, not masculine in character, and that the spirit of purity which breathes through them is essentially the womanly spirit. She had particular power and skill in the delineation of female characters, especially those of an unusual degree of elevation and purity. This in itself would have sufficiently betrayed the sex of the writer now when people have had far wider opportunities of judging of the differences between men and women as authors. Thackeray could give us an Ethel Newcome and a Becky Sharp, but women were needed to give us a Dorothea, a Marion Erle, or a Shirley Keeldar. Mrs. Siddons, the great actress, was charmed by the character of Jane de Montfort in Joanna Baillie's Tragedy on Hatred. The play called "De Montfort" was put upon the stage by John Kemble, the brother of Mrs. Siddons, and the two, who were the greatest actor and actress of their time, appeared in it. It ran for eleven nights, but it was not successful on the stage. Joanna's complete ignorance of what was requisite for the success of a play upon the stage foredoomed her to failure; the audience was, in the first act, let into the secret upon which the plot of the whole play turned, consequently as the drama proceeded the interest in it, instead of becoming more and more intense, gradually dwindled away, until in the fifth act it had quite evaporated. Mrs. Siddons, whose admiration for the character of Jane de Montfort has been already mentioned, is said to have remarked to the poetess, "Make me some more Jane de Montforts"—a request which does not appear to have been gratified. In all, five of Joanna Baillie's plays were put upon the stage—two of them, called "Constantine and Valeria" and "The Family Legend," had a considerable degree of success. "The Family Legend" was brought out in Edinburgh in 1809, under the special patronage of Sir Walter Scott, who wrote the prologue of the play. At a later date it was reproduced in London.

The authorship of Joanna Baillie's first volume of plays did not long remain a secret. Sir Walter Scott was the first to make a successful guess as to the personality of the writer; and the discovery led to the formation of a warm friendship between him and Joanna, which only terminated with his life. Many of Scott's most delightful and characteristic letters were written to her. It was perhaps Scott's too generous appreciation of Joanna's powers as a dramatist that led to her plays being so much overrated as they certainly were when they first appeared. Scott compared her to Shakespeare. Miss Mitford followed suit, saying of her

sister-writer, "Her tragedies have a boldness and grasp of mind, a firmness of hand, and resonance of cadence that scarcely seem within the reach of a female writer." Byron made her an exception to his sweeping generalities concerning the female sex, saying, "Woman (save Joanna Baillie) cannot write tragedy."

In 1825, the golden mists which had surrounded the sunrise of her literary life had melted away. Charles Lamb was too keen a critic probably to have been carried away by the stream of fashion at any time, but in the year mentioned, writing to his friend Bernard Barton, he says: "I think you told me your acquaintance with the drama was confined to Shakespeare and Miss Baillie: some read only Milton and Croly. The gap is as from an ananas to a turnip." Lamb's contemptuous reference measures the rapid fall from the heights of fame which Joanna Baillie endured, and endured without any failure of sweetness and dignity of character.

Joanna Baillie's day as a poetess was of short duration: it is now chiefly as a woman that she charms and helps us. Her house at Hampstead was for many years a meeting-place for those who were most worth meeting, either for talent or goodness; her kindly and gentle influence brought out all that was best in her guests and companions. In Miss Martineau's autobiography she has something to say about nearly all the lions and lionesses of the literary London of her day, and she singles out our poetess for special commendation. "There was Joanna Baillie," she writes, "whose serene and gentle life was never troubled by the pains and penalties of vanity; what a charming spectacle was she! Mrs. Barbauld's published correspondence tells of her in 1800, as a 'young lady of Hampstead whom I visited, and who came to Mr. Barbauld's meeting, all the while with as innocent a face as if she had never written a line.' That was two years before I was born. When I met her about thirty years afterwards, there she was, still 'with as innocent a face, as if she had never written a line!' And this was after an experience which would have been a bitter trial to an author with a particle of vanity. She had enjoyed a fame almost without parallel, and had outlived it. She had been told every day for years, through every possible channel, that she was second only to Shakespeare, if second; and then she had seen her works drop out of notice, so that, of the generation who grew up before her eyes, not one in a thousand had read a line of her plays; yet was her serenity never disturbed, nor her merry humour in the least dimmed." ("Autobiography," vol. i., p. 385.)

This serene and happy temperament accompanied Joanna throughout her long life. She went on writing till past eighty, and lived to the great age of eighty-nine. Her sister Agnes, her inseparable friend and companion, lived to be over a hundred, and preserved her faculties clearly to the end. Joanna Baillie was never ill. The day before her death, she expressed a strong desire to die. She went to bed, apparently in her usual health, but was found to be in a state of coma in the morning, and she died on the afternoon of the same day, 23rd February, 1851.

SUPPERS AND BREAKFASTS.

MENU.

Supper.—Lentil soup with dumplings. Ham and macaroni.

Breakfast.—Ham-toast, eggs, wheatmeal furmity.

To make the following dishes, it is necessary to get a ham-bone from which most of the meat has been sliced. These may be bought very cheaply at a restaurant, where several hams are cut up daily. There will usually be about half a pound of lean ham on the bone, which should be cut off, and scraped until the bone is quite bare.

This bone will give a fine flavour to a large quantity of soup, and should be placed in the stock-pot after using it as below.

Lentil Soup.

Materials.—½ lb. split lentils; 1 ham-bone; 2 onions; 1 carrot; 1 turnip; 3 quarts water (or stock); pepper and salt.

Directions.—Wash the lentils in warm water, and pick them over early in the day, then put them to soak in a quart of cold water. At the same time crack up the ham-bone, and put it on to boil in two quarts of water or stock. At four o'clock p.m. strain the stock through a colander, put it again into the saucepan, and add to it the lentils and the water in which they have soaked. Scrape and slice the carrot and turnip, slice the onions, add these to the rest when the stock boils, and keep it boiling for three hours, stirring occasionally. An hour before supper the soup should be finished as follows: pulp the lentils and vegetables through a colander, return the pulp to the rest of the soup, add pepper and salt, and bring the whole to boiling point. Now put in the dumplings, and boil them sharply stirring often, until they rise to the surface, when they are done. They will cook in ten or fifteen minutes, according to size. Serve hot. Time, 12 hours.

Plain Dumplings.

Materials.—Flour, ½ lb.; shred fat, 3 ozs.; baking powder and salt, each one teaspoonful.

Directions.—Dumplings should be mixed as short a time as possible before they are needed, or they will not be light. Mix the materials thoroughly while dry, then stir in enough luke-warm water to form them into a stiff paste, and roll it into small dumplings on a floured board. Be careful in stirring the soup not to break the dumplings: it is, however, necessary to keep thick soup stirred, as it is very apt to burn after the vegetables are pulped. Time, ½ hour.

Ham Macaroni.

Materials.—2 ozs. macaroni; 4 ozs. minced ham; 2 ozs. bread crumbs; 1 tablespoonful chopped parsley; pepper and salt.

Directions.—Break the macaroni into bits about three inches long, put these into a double stew-pan of hot water (before described) or a brown necked jar of hot water, and stew them until they are fully swelled and tender, which will be in about an hour. Then pour off the water, turn the macaroni into a tin baking dish, cover it with minced ham and chopped parsley, with pepper and salt to taste. Lay the bread crumbs over the whole, and bake in a sharp oven for twenty minutes, till brown. Serve hot, with freshly-made mustard. Time, 2 hours.

BREAKFAST.

Ham Toast.

Materials.—¼ lb. minced ham; six squares of toast; 3 ozs.

butter; 1 teaspoonful each of finely chopped onion and parsley; 1 tablespoonful milk; pepper and salt to taste.

Directions.—Spread the toast with half the butter, and keep it hot in the oven. Put all the other ingredients into a small saucepan, and stir them over the fire till hot through. Spread the toast with the mixture and serve hot. Time, ½ hour.

Wheatmeal Furmity.

Materials.—1 teacupful wholemeal; 2 teacupfuls sultana raisins; 2 tablespoonfuls sugar; 1 quart water.

Directions.—Mix the meal smoothly with a little of the cold water and a pinch of salt; put the rest of the water into a saucepan, and when it boils stir in the mixed meal, the sultanas (which must first be washed and dried), and the sugar. Boil all together for ten minutes, stirring all the time; then place the pan on the hob, and let it cook slowly for twenty minutes. Serve with cold milk. Time, ¾ hour.

This dish will be much liked by children, and is remarkably wholesome for them. The meal used should be the *wholemeal*, i.e. the flour of wheat without sifting, which contains all the salts and minerals needed to build up a healthy frame. Doctors tell us that much of the delicacy of health in the present generation arises from the fact that the white flour on which the children are principally fed has lost its most nutritious parts, which are sifted away.

Plenty of wholemeal, milk, and also of fruit, are necessary for children; and this dish will be found to combine all these things. As their elders may not, however, appreciate a sweet dish for breakfast, eggs have been allowed for their meal in addition to the toast.

Expenses for Supper and Breakfast.

Ham-bone, 10d.; lentils, 1½d.; vegetables, 1½d.; flour, salt, etc., 1½d.; fat, 1d.; macaroni, 2d.; eggs, 3d.; wheatmeal, ½d.; sultanas, 2d.; sugar, 1d.; milk, 4d.; bread, 4d.; butter, 4d. Total 3s.

Average, 6d. each for six persons. I. L. Richmond.

DORA COYNE; OR, HID IN THE HEART.

BY JESSIE M. E. SAXBY,

Author of "Gerta's Newrsgaf," "Lindeman Brothers," etc.

CHAPTER XX.

"I SUPPOSE the Falconers have secured that young man Buist at last, for I saw him passing up our street this morning with Joe Falconer. They were going directly to Sir James Coyne's business premises, so that affair must be all smoothed over."

Mrs. Webster was the speaker, and she was addressing her husband, the doctor, who answered rather shortly, "I believe you have imagined the greater part of that story. Buist had a boyish fancy for Dora Falconer, as a good many Hackleton men had, and it died a natural death as such things do more often than not."

"Then, why has he never been here since she became engaged to Sir James, I'd like to know?"

"Bless me! when a man goes away from a poky place to study for a profession, and does not find it convenient to return for some time, is it to be declared that his reason for keeping away is because a girl snubbed him?"

"Oh, well! we'll see what happens next," said Mrs. Webster, and changed the subject, finding the doctor not communicative just then.

That morning Robina and Kaiser had had a long private talk together, which pleased Mrs. Falconer, and set the twins whispering in the next room. He had arrived late on the previous evening, and he was quite composed and prepared for what he had to go through with. The first result of that consultation with *la petite sœur*, was that Kaiser said to Joe, "If you are going into the town soon I'll go with you. I wish my first call to be upon Sir James."

"All right! we'll go now. I want to see Dora as soon as I can, and should like to go back with the carriage when it drops Sir James at the office. He comes punctually to his time, so if we are there when he arrives I'll get lifted to Oldham Grange, promptly."

Thus the first person Sir James saw when he alighted at his place of business was Kaiser, standing erect and grave, with his honest gaze ready to meet any man's eyes. Sir James had heard he was coming, and had been pleased, for he thought that Robina *was* healing Kaiser's hurt, and that he had come to see *her*. He never suspected that the young man was there to contradict gossip for Dora's sake.

"I am glad to see you again, Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist," he said, extending his hand.

They exchanged a few words more, and then Joe asked, "May I go back to The Grange with your carriage, Sir James?"

"Of course. Dora will be delighted. You will see a great difference in Edmund. The child grows so rapidly. And, by the way, perhaps your friend will go with you." Then to Kaiser, he added, "Lady Coyne and my sisters will be glad to see you if you care to go with Joe, or have nothing better to do this morning."

"I will go with pleasure, Sir James."

So in a few minutes more he was driving rapidly towards Oldham Grange, and half Hackleton knew that young Buist had gone in Sir James's carriage to call upon Dora.

As they passed the lodge they came in sight of Edmund under charge of a nurse and Guard, and no sooner did he catch sight of Joe than there was a clamorous demand to "'Top! tim hea! I 'ant oo! I 'ant oo!"

The carriage was stopped, and sent round to the stables while Kaiser and Joe turned to greet Edmund; then accompanied by him, they walked the avenue towards the house. From his perch on Joe's shoulder Edmund criticised Kaiser in silence, and, having satisfied himself that the stranger would be a fit and proper acquaintance, the little king straightway held out his hands, and announced, "Eddie 'ike big man."

Kaiser took him from Joe, and carried him till they reached the garden. There they came suddenly upon Dora sitting under shadow of a tree, a book on her lap, her eyes looking far beyond trees and hill, and smoke-wreaths rising

from the town. She had not heard their voices, only her child's merry prattle, which (if she thought about it at all) she believed was addressed to Guard.

But she knew that Kaiser had arrived at her mother's house the night before, and she was thinking of him, schooling her heart to keep its secret unbroken, praying God to give her strength, and give him strength. It was by God's own guidance that he appeared before her with her child in his arms, for that gave Dora the help she needed. As for Kaiser, his heart gave one mighty bound, as his eyes lighted on her; then he was still, calm, and master of himself as he had never been before.

"Hullo! you're there, Dora!" Joe cried, and gave her a fraternal hug on the spot, and when that was over she was ready with Kaiser's welcome. "I am glad to see you, Kaiser."

He did not put Edmund down, but he took the hand she held out, and they exchanged one quiet friendly glance.

Neither read the least regret, the slightest longing, in the other's face. Their love was under the command of a mightier power than any earthly passion, and they knew how to keep it hid in their hearts.

"Your son has been making friends with me already, you see," Kaiser said; and Dora answered, smiling, "Consider yourself complimented, for Edmund does not make friends with many people. He objects to gentlemen as a rule."

"Quite right; Eddie, always prefer the ladies," said Joe.

"'Oo mutant tall me dat. Nobody tay 'Eddie,' but muvva and favva tall me Ed-m-mond."

"At last he can say his own name!" Dora exclaimed; and then Edmund, elated over such a feat, struggled to the ground, and trotted off shouting, "Mut tell aunties can tay Ed-m-mound! Ed-m-mound!"

Joe flung himself on the grass at full length, exclaiming, "How delicious! Let's stay here, Doe." So she resumed her chair, and Kaiser leant his back against the tree under which she sat, and talked of this and that, as if they had

only parted a few days before and under the most ordinary circumstances. It was not the Dora in his soul that he was talking to, but the Dora who was Edmund's mother.

By-and-by the child returned, escorted by his aunts, and, finding Joe prostrate and convenient, he immediately rolled over him, and the two had a fine romp among the cool grass, while the Misses Coyne tried to make themselves agreeable to Mr. Buist.

Susan had brought a basket of fruit, and it was appreciated by the gentlemen. They slowly demolished it, talked to the ladies, romped with Edmund, and the morning slipped past before any one was aware that lunch-time had arrived.

It was the appearance of Sir James strolling up the garden at his usual hour that told the time.

"I had no idea it was so late," said Joe.

"Going to stay lunch, I hope," Sir James said to Kaiser.

"I promised to go out with Robina this afternoon," he answered.

"Come and dine with us in the evening then, and bring Robina," the host said, with a covert smile.

"Please, if I'm good, mayn't I come too?" Joe asked.

"Certainly. Come in a body. Come all of you. Dora, have you food enough to feed so many?"

Sir James was in excellent spirits. It had pleased him excessively to find his wife and her quondam lover on such agreeable terms; the last shred of uneasy feeling vanished, and he was assured that all was as it should be.

"And what do you think of this little man, Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist?" he asked, as he took Edmund up.

Of course Kaiser praised the child. He was very fond of children, and they of him, and Edmund was indeed a beautiful as well as intelligent boy.

The little king took that opportunity, observing that his father was in a very indulgent humour, to whisper to him, "Mind oo pomise, favva. Eddie no foeget."

"No, Eddie never forgets! But we must consult 'muvva,' my son. I am not to be wheedled into committing myself too far with you without her sanction."

"What treason are you two plotting?" Dora asked, as Kaiser and Joe moved away, and the others went into the house. "What has father promised, Edmund?"

"In a weak moment I said I would take him to the Convalescent Home to-day. He has, it seems, struck up a mighty friendship with an old woman who is now there, and nothing will please him but he must go visit her."

"That's old Mrs. Brown. I used to take him with me to see her when she was ill," said Miss Coyne.

"I think muvva consents to the project," said mother.

In high glee that afternoon Edmund went off with his father, the two of them seated in state side by side in the large carriage, with the high-stepping bays trotting elegantly along, and the dignified coachman looking loftily down upon all vehicles which be overtook, and passed on the road.

As I said Sir James was in very good humour that day; very open to persuasion, weakly ready to be cajoled by his son; and that Edmund knew right well.

There was a certain shop where a certain sweetmeat, which Edmund dearly loved, was sold, and after the Convalescent Home had been visited, when the carriage was returning through Hackleton, the little king set himself to over persuading Sir James. Both father and son knew that "muvva" objected to those sweets, unless demolished under her own eye. She had said to Miss Coyne in Sir James's hearing a day or two before (when Aunt Martha was taking Edmund into the town with her), "Please, Martha, don't drive through Queen Street," and Sir James supposed Dora said that to prevent temptation, for in Queen Street was the sweet-shop.

However, Edmund was coaxing, and Sir James was weak, and the result was that the bays turned into Queen's Street, and drew up at the forbidden spot.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DEADLY FOE.

SOON as the steps were down out jumped Edmund, and into the shop like a snowball. No one was in waiting (it was a small shop kept by a widow and her daughter), but Edmund had been there often, and was familiar with the premises. He ducked under the counter, and going to a small glass door with a curtain in front of it, he pushed it open, and stepped into the room behind. This was a small kitchen-parlour, and from beyond it he could hear a curious noise, proceeding from some one in pain. On he went, and was standing in a moment beside the bed of a dying girl. Her mother was bending over her, the girl was gasping for breath. She was the first to notice the child, but she could not speak, she could only point to him in an agitated manner.

"Oh, Master Edmund," the widow cried, "go away, dear, go away," and laying the girl back on her pillows the poor woman caught his hand to lead him from the room to the shop where Sir James was waiting and wondering.

"Oh, Sir James, Sir James, take your child right away. There is sore trouble here. My poor Nancy has caught that terrible throat complaint, and I am to lose her. Master Edmund knows his way about, and came."

The father caught up Edmund, and took him out to the carriage at once without one word, and the child had been so startled at sight of the dying girl that he made no protest, but merely said, "Eddie not dot weets."

Sir James returned to the shop, and asked the woman, "Can I do anything for you, Mrs. Smith?"

"None can help now but the Lord," said she.

He stood a moment as if confused. Then saying, "God be with you then," he went away, and ordered the carriage home, "Whea Eddie's weets?" Edmund asked, and his father answered, "I have not got them, my son. We were forgetting mother's wishes. We must not have sweets. We must ask her forgiveness when we come home."

There was that in his voice, in his eyes, that kept the child quiet, and they spoke little during the rest of their drive.

When they reached The Grange Sir James sought Dora at once, and asked, "Why did you tell Martha not to drive along Queen Street, Dora?"

"Because Edmund always wants to go into Mrs. Smith's shop, and I heard that there was scarlet fever or something of the sort in the house next hers. Nancy Smith is ill, and Martha was told that it is some infectious disease; but"—and now Dora noticed his horrified expression—"why, do you ask, James?"

"I took Edmund there."

"How unfortunate! Oh, James! But don't look so frightened; he mayn't have got any harm by going to the shop."

"He—he escaped me, and got into the house. He was in the girl's room. Dora! Dora!"

"God help us," the mother cried.

When the Falconers arrived in the evening they found

Sir James greatly disturbed, the aunts hysterical, and Dora very quiet and pale; but a degree of cheerfulness came back with Joe's assurances that Edmund was not at all likely to have taken any harm.

Kaiser, too, affirmed that there was small cause for anxiety; and after a little time he contrived to draw Dora aside, and whisper to her, "Your boy is in God's hands. Trust Him."

"Could it be *Kaiser* who gave her that comfort?" Dora asked herself—Kaiser who had so often mocked at her faith, and now was strengthening it by his words!

"Thank you. I can trust Him," she answered, and then by an effort she rallied her usual bright spirits, and led the others to dismiss their tremors.

"Joe tells me," said Sir James, addressing Kaiser, "that we may have a visit from Count von Linckmyer shortly?"

"Yes. I have written to my uncle about my future, as he desired; and I expect he will join me here in a few weeks."

Then Kaiser quietly explained that he had relinquished his dream of the "foreign fields," as it seemed a more imperative duty to attend upon his uncle's wishes.

Dora had heard details, and had read his letters on the subject, so understood the situation. But Sir James did not, and was rather disappointed in the young man.

"I understood," he said, "that you were educating expressly for a missionary career?"

"I was, and I hope I can still do mission-work though in a different field. I have had some new lights given me on the subject of mission-work," and the speaker glanced smilingly at Robina, who said, "You are going to blame me, are you, for your latest bit of self-denial? Sir James, it was with the utmost difficulty that I could persuade Kaiser to accept any new lights whatever!"

"I hope you will excuse me if I presume in what I say," said Sir James, addressing Kaiser, "you have made a wise decision, but I fear this change of purpose may look to most men (zealous for God's honour and the good name of His professing servants) like putting a hand to the plough and looking back."

"It does *look* like that, but I hope to prove in the future that I have never once looked back since I put my life at the feet of Christ for Him to do with as He sees fit."

Dora looked up at him. She could have given her life at that moment for liberty to say what was in her mind, but she only said, "We understand you, Kaiser."

"Thank you, Lady Coyne. You know how dependent I am upon the sympathy of my friends, and will therefore believe that nothing earthly strengthens me so much as their approval. I am ready to meet the censure of the world when I am backed by the commendation of my friends."

"The Count will be vastly pleased at your decision," Sir James remarked.

"Yes, and I wish I were as sure that another of my benefactors will be glad too. But I am still uneasy on that point, and I don't know how to clear it up. I shall have to get your help, Robina."

Robina nodded her willingness to aid, and Joe asked—"You mean about that good Samaritan business, Kaiser?"

"Yes. I am still in the dark."

"May *we* hear about it, as well as Robina?" Dora inquired. "Who is your good Samaritan?"

"I wish I knew myself. This is the story. When I got smashed and was lying at Northcote alone and penniless, at the mercy of strangers, some good soul—sent of God, I have believed—came and looked after me. Saw that I was nursed and helped to recovery and paid all the expenses of my illness—"

At this part of the story Robina sent a covert glance at Sir James, but he frowned down the declaration on her lips and she kept silence.

"What sort of a person did the gentleman look like?" Mrs. Falconer asked. "Perhaps we can identify him for you. I am sure I could count on my fingers all the philanthropists in this neighbourhood."

"I never saw my benefactor. He is one of those who do good *not* to be seen of men. When I recovered I found he had put money in the bank for me to help me to retrieve and do work for God in the world. There was a beautiful little note for me at the bank also, which I treasure now though I don't know who wrote it."

"Probaby the Count your uncle is at the bottom of it all," said Mrs. Falconer; "he seems to be a person who prefers acting in a somewhat eccentric manner."

"No, it wasn't the Count: *he* never wrote that note. It wasn't in his line at all. I've turned the matter round and round and outside in, and I can't in the least guess—"

He stopped short there for his glance had fallen on Dora, and he saw that she was gazing straight at her husband with tears in her eyes, and Sir James was trying to look unconscious but failing signally. The expression of husband and wife revealed in one flash of thought the truth to Buist, and he sat still and silent, quite unnerved for a moment by the discovery.

Robina came to everybody's assistance at that juncture—"You are saying," she said, "that your unknown benefactor, to whom you feel under strong obligation to go on with the career he seems to have desired for you, may object to your change of plans. But I think differently, by your leave, Kaiser. Your good Samaritan must be a wise man, as well as generous, and he will appreciate your motives if he has (as I have no doubt he has) been watching your progress."

Then Sir James stammered, "You know your own business best—and the Count—his wishes are to be respected—and—and—so forth."

"I shall make it my business to discover my unknown friend, and learn *his* views exactly."

Robina gave him a warning glance then, for there was a threatening cloud on Sir James's brow, and Kaiser held his peace.

When they were parting for the night he said, "May I call at your office to-morrow, Sir James? I wish to talk to you."

"I shall be pleased to see you, Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist."

And into Sir James's office next day walked Kaiser, and straight to the point went he.

"I know, Sir James, that *you* are my unknown benefactor."

"I suppose I must own the truth; but it was nothing much to do, nothing much. I was interested in you, and I thought you needed friends just then."

"I wonder I did not guess it before; but I did not understand you, Sir James. I am glad now that the truth was hid, for, in the state of my mind *at that time*, I don't think I could have taken a favour at your hands."

"I know—I quite understand. Do not let us talk more of it."

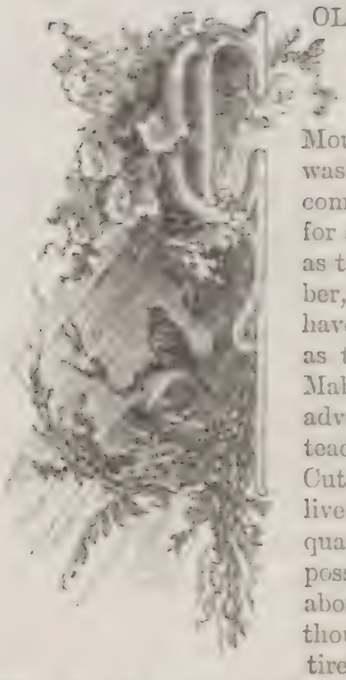
Sir James held out his hand, and the two men stood for a moment with their hands clasped and their eyes fixed on each other. Then Sir James said, in a shaken voice, "I was sorry for you then, and I am glad for you now, Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist."

BREAD-WINNERS.

BY ELIZA CLARKE.

CHAPTER V.

"NEVER WAS LADY ON EARTH MORE TRUE."



COLONEL SINCLAIR'S letter was read and re-read, and the conclusion come to by mother and daughters was that Mrs. Mounsey should remain where she was during the summer, and should come up to London and look out for a house, or part of a house, so as to enter it at the end of September, so that the little ones might have fresh air and pure milk as long as the fine warm weather lasted. Mabel told her mother about the advantages offered by a course of teaching at the Scientific Dress Cutting Association if Bessie only lived near enough to its head-quarters, and promised to take every possible opportunity of inquiring about a suitable abode; and Alice thought if Bessie were to be entirely occupied she had better leave Mrs. Smith and help her mother take care of the children, but Mrs. Mounsey would not hear of it, much as she would have liked to have her eldest-born with her.

The Misses Robins were very kind, and often managed to let Mabel go out and do a little house hunting when the London season was over; they could not very well spare her before. About the middle of August she saw a stationer's shop in a quiet Bayswater street, in the window of which was a card stating that the upper part was to let unfurnished, with or without attendance, so she went in and found that the stationer was a widow, with whom lived a niece almost as old as herself. She knew that the advantage of a house of this kind over the small self-contained house which alone would have been within her mother's means was that the rooms would be larger and airier, and the situation more central, which would be better for Bessie, and easier for herself to get at. The widow was a comfortable and pleasant person and so was her niece, and they had a substantial, staid-looking servant, whom they said they should be able to retain if their rooms were let to any one requiring cooking and attendance.

Moreover, there was a little garden, though nothing grew there except some depressed brownish-looking turf, and a few nasturtiums in an unkempt-looking border, and that was a place where the children could play and get a little air without actually going into the street.

Mabel's account was so good that Mrs. Mounsey came up to see for herself, and finally decided to take four rooms and a box-room from Michaelmas Day, and chose the little extra furniture she wanted so that it might be sent in and spare her the disagreeables of moving into a place that was utterly bare. She had found the children quite comforts to her; the little girls sat at her knee with their sewing and their simple lessons till she almost felt as if her own were about her again, and having got them into this quiet routine, she felt that it might be continued throughout the winter, even if Bessie were absent during a few hours of every day. She was a woman who liked to have her plans settled and to go to work methodically, and it was with a very thankful heart that she recognised that the new paths so providentially marked out for herself and her children would enable them all to earn their own living.

The move was easily accomplished, for when even a little furniture can be sent in and arranged beforehand, the worst miseries of a flitting are over, and furnishing is a much less expensive process than it used to be, for people who are content with real comfort, and do nothing for mere show. The landlady, Mrs. Pascoe, knew of a journeyman painter, who, when he had finished his regular work, was glad to paint a border round the floors of the rooms for a very little money; and when this was done, squares of tapestry and other modern carpets, and some of the bent Austrian wood chairs, with a dining-table with a deal top concealed by a cloth in one, and two or three small tables in the other sitting-room, soon transformed them into cosy and not inelegant apartments, though they were so simple. The bedrooms contained necessaries, but that was all, and Mrs. Mounsey felt herself on the high road to seeing her girls equipped for the battle of life far more effectually than she had ever dreamed possible.

Bessie found that at the bottom of the street she could take an omnibus, which for twopence deposited her at the Scientific Dress-Cutting Association in Regent Circus, and when the mornings were fine she frequently walked, for, over and above the benefit of exercise, she was quite aware of the practical value of twopences. She found it necessary to be up early, and work tolerably hard, for she helped dress the children and prepare and clear away breakfast before she started, and liked to reach her destination soon after ten, as she could only remain three hours at a time, and was glad to get back for the half-past one o'clock dinner. In the afternoon she took the little ones out, sometimes getting as far as Kensington Gardens with them, and after tea she sat at the table and worked hard at the calculations and diagrams connected with the system she was learning, which she intended to master as soon as possible, in order to save her fares as well as to fit herself for some kind of situation. She had a natural aptitude for figures, and this helped her considerably, and she not only obtained a first-class certificate as soon as it was possible for a pupil to do so, but went through the whole of what is called the diploma course, making so sure of every step as she proceeded that she lost no time in uncertainty or wondering how she should begin the several tasks set before her, and consequently earned the reputation of being a quick as well as a "smart" worker. When pronounced perfect, Bessie stayed at home quietly with her mother for a week or two, and found plenty of occupation; but one morning a note from the manager at the "Scientific" requested her to come to his office and meet a lady and a gentleman, each of whom had a situation to offer, and she set off in high spirits, feeling sure that her opportunity had come at last.

The gentleman was grey-haired, and had come to town to get a young lady who was *diplomée* to take the head of his workroom at Birmingham, where he had a large drapery business, to which he had recently added dressmaking, as he found that so many customers preferred being told the price of a complete dress, and having it, to buying material and

getting it made up themselves. But directly he saw Bessie he told her kindly that, however suitable she might be in the way of skill, she was too young for the post he had to offer. Bessie's heart sank, especially as the lady who had just come in looked stern, and had anything but an inviting manner.

It does not do, however, to judge from appearances, and Bessie found that Mrs. Ellison's situation had advantages which more than overbalanced any peculiarity of manner. She was in business as a Court milliner in a private house near Hyde Park, and thoroughly understood every department herself.

"I wish to have some one who cuts out and does everything else by system, and not at hap-hazard," she said; "but I am the judge of what my customers like, and if I am pleased I generally find that they are. I cannot have any one who is too clever or too conceited to take my suggestions and act on them."

Bessie replied that she should be only too pleased to be guided, and Mrs. Ellison's manner was somewhat softened at once.

"I cannot make you a very tempting offer to begin with," she continued, "but I am prepared to pay three pounds a month, and you will have meals with me. I am rather put to it for sleeping accommodation, or I should not offer quite so much; but I believe your home is not very far off."

"Mamma will be very glad if I can sleep at home," replied Bessie, mentioning where she lived, and this gave great satisfaction to Mrs. Ellison, who, after asking a few particulars, was delighted to find that she had met with a girl whose home was above the average of that of most girls who seek such situations as hers. She arranged that Bessie should enter on her new duties at nine o'clock on the following Monday, and said that when time and the press of business permitted she should call on her mother.

Mrs. Mounsey was quite thankful that Bessie had met with a post which would allow them to be together on Sundays, and would enable her to keep her youngest child under her own eye, to a certain extent; but she foresaw some very late nights and hard work, and the result proved that she was right.

Bessie found Mrs. Ellison a hard mistress, but she managed to give her satisfaction, and referred to her so often in matters of detail that she very rarely had to rectify mistakes, and when such things did occur bore herself with such good temper that she escaped the harsh words that would have been called forth by a frown or unwillingness to make alterations.

When the London season came, and they were so busy that Bessie could not go home in proper time, Mrs. Ellison would send her home in a cab, or arrange for some one to walk with her, or send Mrs. Mounsey word that she would improvise a bed on a sofa for the few hours of rest that could be snatched; and as time went on, Bessie was more and more trusted, and her salary raised, and as she was not a very bookish girl, and had always thought teaching must be terrible drudgery, she used to tell her mother that it was a good thing she had not had more education or she should never have thought of a line of life that suited her taste, and already promised her a good position.

CHAPTER VI.

"Daily shower life's blessings down,
And fill young lives with sweetness.'

Without going into all the details of Mrs. Mounsey's life we must chronicle a few of its ups and downs, though, after the years of great trial that followed her husband's death her way was comparatively smooth. The little Indian cousins came to be almost as dear as her own girls, and, considering that she was country born and bred, she adapted herself wonderfully to London life. Herbert, who looked so delicate when he came, battled through the almost inevitable childish illnesses better than could have been expected, and when he was ten years old Colonel Sinclair came over and placed him at a school near Oxford, where the course of study was such as to prepare him for going into the army when the right time came, and following his father's footsteps. He always came home to Auntie for the holidays, and proved a companionable, kind brother to his sisters, who always looked forward with the greatest pleasure to the weeks he spent with them. This left Mrs. Mounsey comparatively free to enjoy the companionship of her eldest daughter, Alice, who, though she had long left Mrs. Smith, had continued to be a

governess, and, on the whole, had been tolerably comfortable. In one of her situations she had met with a lover, in the person of the curate of the parish, and they were both waiting patiently for the better days that would enable them to marry.

Bessie had been about five years with Mrs. Ellison, when that lady was stricken with illness, which left her very much of an invalid, though she would have been far worse and terribly unhappy if she had given up business. Besides, she had a husband who spent rather than earned, and a family, the members of which, though what is called "settled in life," often came to their mother for assistance, so she could not afford to retire. She had confidence in Bessie, and made arrangements for her to live in the house, giving her a salary of £100 a year, and an occasional present of some article of dress that was always good and, therefore, valuable. She had, moreover, opened a supplementary business for underclothing, both for ladies and children, and installed Mabel as its manager; and Mrs. Mounsey had removed there and taken the remainder of the house, so that she was Mrs. Ellison's tenant, and Mabel was at home.

"Under her fingers the old piano rang again."

Instead of pursuing the system of home education with the little Sinclairs, after they had conquered the rudiments of knowledge, Mrs. Mounsey sent them to a high school, where they were educated according to the lights of the present day, and their father, instead of being horrified, as so many military men would have been, by the close connection with business in their home and in the persons of Mabel and Bessie, declared that their relatives were the most sensible persons he knew, and told his children that he should be proud to see them getting their own living in any honourable and honest way.

The way that opened before them, however, was not exactly trade. Mary had a natural taste for flower-painting, which did not receive much encouragement from the drawing-masters whose lessons she attended. She went through all the stages of freehand drawing very creditably, and from that point struck out in a path of her own, and painted every flower she could get hold of. She was about leaving the high school when, on a mid-term holiday, Bessie had to go to the house of a very great lady who had once or twice told Mrs. Ellison that she or any of her family could see the art treasures for which her house was famous, so Bessie knew that her cousin might have that pleasure. The girl's attention was taken by the frieze of the boudoir, which was painted with scarlet poppies; and when she saw that two ladies were at work painting the door-panels with more poppies and ox-eye daisies and grasses, she showed such evident and intelligent interest that the elder one got into conversation with her and drew out some of her ideas. This lady kept, and keeps, a studio for decorative purposes, and she invited the child to call and see her and her pupils at work, and bring with her some specimens of her own painting, which were regarded as promising. Mrs. Mounsey soon found that the outlay of a very few pounds would provide lessons and materials, and the girl was speedily enrolled among a little band of students who are chosen in rotation and according to their gifts, to go out with their mistress, and not only advise with her but help carry out the orders she receives for the decoration of houses.

Hetty, the youngest child, had a decided talent for music; under her fingers the old piano rang again. It was in her by nature, and, therefore, she profited by every lesson, and when she went to the Guildhall School of Music became one of the favourite pupils.

But here we must leave our friends, who, in doing the duty that lay nearest to them, have exemplified the truth of the old saying,

"Help yourselves and Heaven will help you.'

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

In chill October it is high time to think about winter wraps, and they are not at all difficult to make by the aid of a good pattern and a sewing machine. Neatness is, however, requisite, and the possession of a few widths of old silk wherewith to line such a garment down to about the waist is a great addition to warmth and comfort. In the absence of this, Italian cloth is the best lining; but many people make them up entirely without, binding each edge of the seams, when pressed out, with narrow galloon to prevent fraying. A very nice trimming is plush, which wears better than velvet, because it is not injured by wet. Even if soaked by a shower it is only necessary to dry, and then shake and brush it out; but plush must never be touched while wet. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that if a lining is put in, it need not be fastened into the back seam, but left loose, and hemmed straight along.

Materials for these wraps and also for warm jackets and mantles that ought to find favour, are the black, navy blu , and brown Irish friezes, which, until the exhibition at Olympia, were less known in England than they ought to have been. They are of pure wool, entirely unadulterated with jute or cotton, and the surface presents a great many upstanding hairs and tiny glossy curls of wool that simply set rain at defiance and keep it from penetrating. They look so good, too, and are not more expensive than adulterated cloths. Girls who like fancy work can indulge in it and prepare their winter dresses at one and the same time, for braiding, which has been fashionable for at least a year, is now considered indispensable to a woollen dress. And it is not only done in braids which are properly so-called, but in twisted cord, which often consists of three colours, or of two with a strand of gold silk or tinsel. It must be sewn on even more firmly than braid, and not more than a single stitch should be taken at a time.

Very pretty little capes for all sorts of dresses are being made three-fold, that is, with three separate capes one above another, finished off with a ruche of pinked out silk round the neck and a bow in front. They do not supersede outdoor jackets or cloaks, but are useful for mild days, or for wearing under a wrap which is slipped off in church, or in the house when making a call.

Hats are much trimmed with long loops and ends falling down the back, and very often this is managed by simply taking a length of ribbon, passing it quite plainly round the front of a sailor hat and tying it behind, pulling out the loops and making them nearly as long as the ends. Beads are very popular for outlining bonnets, and are extremely durable, especially if fastened off strongly at each end. A very satisfactory way of mounting them is to string the beads on a fine wire and fasten them to the bonnet by a stitch across the wire between each bead. Many bonnets are made with alternate stripes of fancy plait, or of gathered silk and velvet, trimmed with ribbons and a butterfly. These last are made of several colours in thin silk and wire, and wear considerably better than flowers. The favourite tint is bluish-grey with the body covered with tinsel thread.

Many bodices are made with V-shaped openings before and behind, and worn with chemisettes consisting simply of a neck band and a full piece of soft material, woollen or silk, set into it all the way round. It is peculiarly useful for such a dress as a dark silk, and is a return to the fashions of a long ago generation which wore folded kerchiefs of lawn, muslin, or Brussels net, put on before the gowns and filling up the neck.

The long autumn and winter evenings are capital opportunities for making underclothing. Petticoat bodices can be made very nicely in long cloth or flannel. In the latter it is desirable to avoid bulk as much as possible, and, therefore, the best way of finishing the top is by buttonhole stitch scallops. A running pattern of holes can also be worked as in any other embroidery, and a narrow ribbon run through them and tied in front adds strength as well as keeping the bodice close round the neck.

One of the most favourite materials this autumn is Vel-Vel, which has been much improved by undergoing a process known as the Lee finish. It is made in a great many shades of colour, and is peculiarly light as well as warm, and one of the virtues of this material is that as long as it will hang together it looks well by artificial light. A coarse Irish poplin makes a very useful warm dress for a careful person, and serves the double purpose of a winter and a best or evening gown. Serges and cloth dresses are being trimmed with vandyked leather, not very much unlike that which is nailed on bookshelves to keep the dust from the volumes, but undyed and narrower. Basques are edged with it, the cloth being pinked out first and the leather laid under. Leather vests, collars and deep cuffs are also being made, and small leather straps with miniature buckles are trying to supersede buttons as fastenings.

Steels are less and less worn, and in Vienna, from which city we now get as many fashions as from Paris, they are altogether discarded. It is therefore necessary for ladies who have to go out in dirty weather to have their skirts very short, or else to adopt some mode of drawing them up. This last is best, for though it is most desirable to keep clean, short skirts are not pretty indoors. Buttons exactly matching the dress, and large enough to serve as ornaments, are being put on the seams with braided tabs, pointed, and having each a buttonhole at the lower end. This is fastened to the lower button on going out of doors, and six of them shorten the dress quite sufficiently. The polonaises, now worn so long, must be furnished with the same apparatus, for it is useless to preserve the skirt from the mud and then draggle the polonaise.

Blouses, though not so much worn as they were in summer, are admirable for wearing out old skirts, and a scarlet or maroon blouse, plain or striped, looks very nice with a black, navy blue, or dark brown skirt. The most popular ways of making them are smocked, with yokes, or after the Russian fashion, that is to say, pleated, and with a straight braided or even-broidered neck band and a pointed strap of the same going down each shoulder seam, the point just touching the top of the sleeve. The cuffs are formed of pointed straps with the ends hanging over.

A most important point in the fit of a dress is the corset worn under it, and a new one has recently come out called the "Lovida," which is especially good for young people, and, indeed, for all who have not reached the age at which it is desirable to have the corset fitted and made to individual requirements. The "Lovida" is not only cut with the utmost care for the due proportion of every part, which is the secret of true symmetry, but is made to expand to the natural growth and development of the chest by means of smocking, which is elastic. The notion is very simple and natural; but, apparently, no one has ever hit upon it before.

MEDICAL MISSION WORK IN THE ZENANAS OF INDIA.

BY MARY CAVALIER, OF THE ZENANA BIBLE AND MEDICAL MISSION.

"We should wish it generally known that we sympathise with every effort made to relieve the suffering state of the women of India."—*Queen Victoria.*

ONE day in India a native Christian came and asked me if I would go with her, and see a woman who was very ill. It was very hot when we started; the burning rays of the sun seemed to pierce through pith hat and white-covered umbrella, making one long for the shade.

We passed many native houses, until we came to a low door, which led through a fairly clean and neat apartment into the court-yard. Here we reached the entrance to a small and very dark room. My guide invited me to enter. I did so, and found it so dark that I could barely distinguish the figure of a woman lying on a charpoy, or low cot. On either side of her squatted a dai, or native nurse. Such evil-looking beings I have rarely seen. Their clothes were very dirty, their hair dishevelled, and from their long, bony fingers, nails more like claws extended.

"Fit attendants on an invalid," I thought, with a shudder.

"Can you not admit a little light, that I may see the patient?" I asked.

"We cannot do that," one of these nurses replied. "Darkness is suited to her case."

Feeling unable to stand the stuffiness and heat of the place any longer, I insisted that a small wooden shutter should be taken down.

Unwillingly they removed it. A very slender streak of light was admitted through this little aperture, but it was sufficient to let me see everything more clearly than before.

The sick woman was lying on the only piece of furniture in the tiny room. She was attired in a bright cloth, and had on a great deal of jewellery. She was perfectly motionless, and looked very faint and ill; and no wonder, when she had been in great agony all night from a painful internal disease of long standing.

I suggested a simple remedy to try and restore consciousness.

"No, no," the dais exclaimed, and one of them turned and spat out betel juice.

"Then I will send chicken-broth, or milk, if you will feed her with very small quantities at a time," I said.

"You can send it," they replied, "but we cannot give it."

"Why not?" I asked.

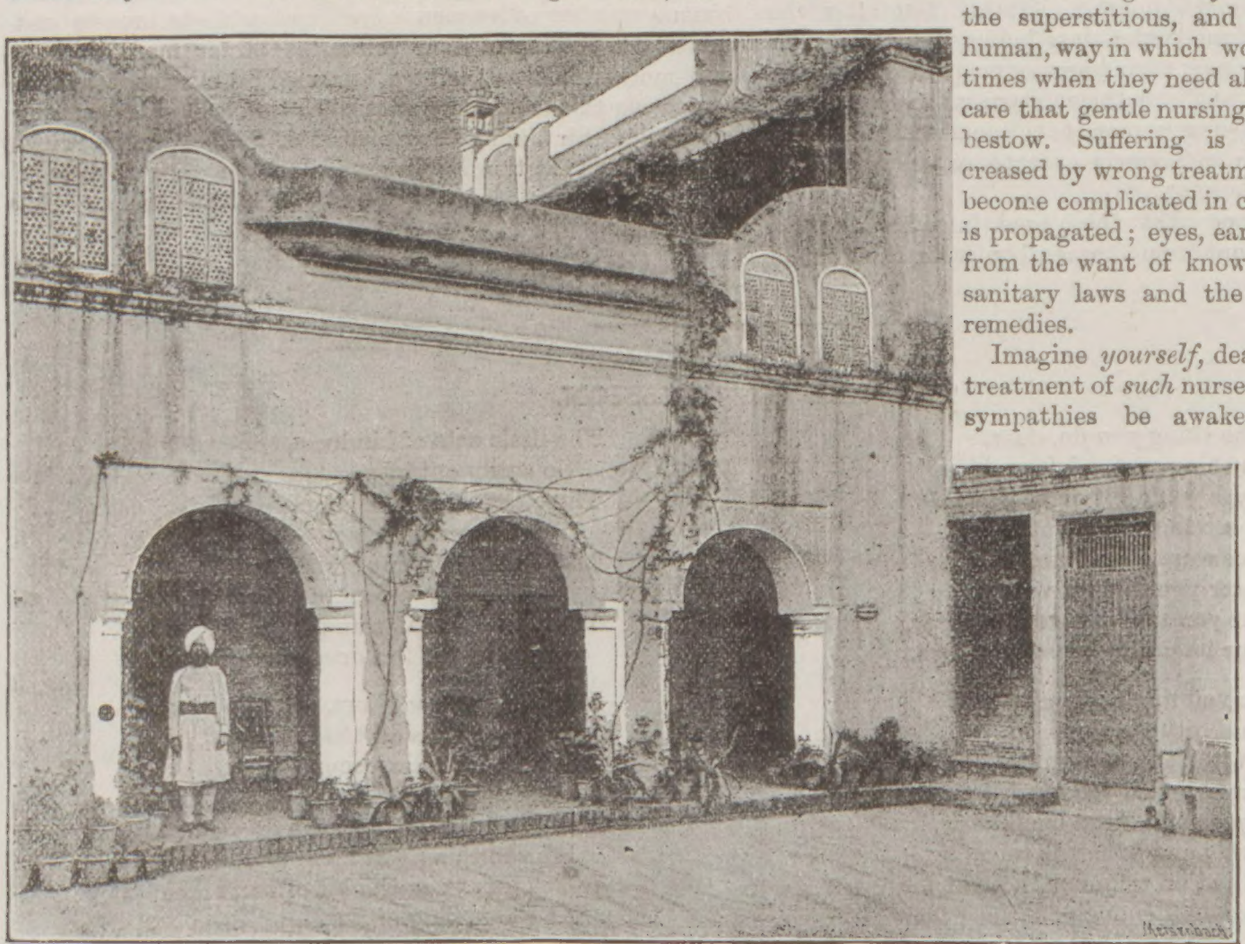
"During the night we gave her a mixture," one said, "and now we are watching its effect. If she moves we shall give her more of it; if she remains as you see her we shall consider that it is her fate to die."

Then they closed the shutter, and darkness once more reigned in that little room. Fit emblem of heathenism, I thought, shutting out the True Light—ah, and the love, too, of human beings one for another.

The poor woman's husband was near, and in a surly way resented any interference, and refused to allow me to do anything for his wife.

Seeing, therefore, that my presence was not wanted, and that even my entering the room was looked upon as an evil omen, I left, saddened at the thought of the intense ignorance and superstition of native nurses, whose tender mercies are indeed cruel.

I will not harrow the feelings of my readers by describing the superstitious, and often intensely inhuman, way in which women are treated at times when they need all the solicitude and care that gentle nursing and tender love can bestow. Suffering is a thousandfold increased by wrong treatment, and many cases become complicated in consequence. Disease is propagated; eyes, ears, and skin all suffer from the want of knowledge of even a few sanitary laws and the simplest medicinal remedies.



Court of a Zenana.

Imagine *yourself*, dear reader, under the treatment of *such* nurses; and will not your sympathies be awakened for your less favoured sisters in India? Oh, pray for them and help them.

The ignorance of mothers, again, is so trying. One came to me with a little black baby in her arms, very ill with bronchitis. The only sign of clothing on the child was a small plate of silver, hung by a cord round its waist. The child's

head and face were covered with some sort of green paste. The poor little thing was so ill, it could scarcely cry.

I saw at once that it was useless to give the mother any directions, so I said, "Stay here, and I will see to the child." A warm bath gave relief, and effectually removed the green paste, which had, of course, worried the baby.

Towards evening the little one was much better, and, as the weather was rainy and chilly, I put a warm garment on the child, and sent the mother away, but not till she had received the clearest and strictest orders to keep the child clothed and warm.

Early next morning I was surprised to see the woman return.

"Where is the baby's garment?" I exclaimed, as an unclothed infant was again shown me, as ill as ever.

"I have it rolled in my cloth," she replied, "but I took it off last night, and as he seemed ill again this morning I ran to you."

"Where did you lay him last night?"

"I put him on the floor as usual, but it is damp and muddy, as the rain drips in," she calmly replied.

So the same remedies had to be applied again. Fortunately the weather became drier, and the child eventually recovered.

Great is the need of teaching as well as healing amongst the women of India.

If we go back to the past history of the country we find that about the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era there were Hindu *physicians*, who were highly esteemed for their knowledge, and had important positions assigned to them in the courts of princes.

These men were proficient in the art of healing, and might have been more learned in medicines had they not been hampered by religious prejudices.

Woman at that time had her right position. Hindu bards praised her beauty and domestic virtues. But after the Mohammedan invasion, better-class ladies soon lost their freedom, and, age by age, their imprisonment in the zenana became more rigid, until even their nature was changed, and the once bright and joyous women of the country have become so dull and apathetic as scarcely ever to rouse themselves from their life-long lethargy.

When we remember that the caged inmates of these zenanas are not exempt from disease, but from their mode of living are even more prone to it than others, the Christian and the philanthropist must alike feel pity for them, and be anxious to send them medical help.

The amount of unrelieved suffering amongst them is truly appalling. From a statement in the *Times* it appears that, according to the sanitary report of the Government of India, the total number of deaths registered in 1884 amounted to 4,595,648.

This will convey an idea of the vast population of our Indian dominions. Assuming that half the deaths were those of females, we find that 2,297,824 women and girls passed away during the year, an average of 6,294 every day. It is computed that a third of the women of the country are secluded in zenanas, where no men, except the nearest relatives, are admitted. Therefore the deaths inside the zenanas average something like 2,098 every day, and for the great majority of this large number of dying women, as a rule, no intelligent medical aid is possible! And yet India is under British rule, and her people are subjects of Queen Victoria!

The following extract from the magazine of the Medical Missionary Association may suitably close this chapter. A zenana medical lady "speaks of a case which she had been called in to treat, where a patient suffering great debility from continued fever, had been blistered, and had 100 leeches applied to *each* foot, was taking the medicine of some half-a-dozen of different *hakims* (or native physicians), not one of whom had ever seen their patient, but all of whom had felt her pulse at both wrists on every visit. The case was a serious one, and this fact had been the means of collecting all the women of the same caste from the surrounding houses, one part of whom were smoking the hooka and gravely consulting what was best to be done under the circumstances—occasionally breaking out in torrents of abuse of each other when they differed in their diagnosis, or treatment—while in another corner of the room a number of women were beating their breasts and howling at the top of their voices." Oh, for more workers and more funds to increase our medical missions! and in increasing this missionary enterprise we benefit the country generally. Sir John Lawrence said, "I believe, notwithstanding all that the English people have done to benefit India, the missionaries have done more than all other agencies combined.'

THE SIN OF OMISSION.

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
  It's the thing you've left undone,
Which gives you a bit of heartache
  At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten,
  The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, dear,
  Are your haunting ghosts to-night.

The stone you might have lifted
  Out of a brother's way,
The bit of heartsome counsel
  You were hurried too much to say;
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
  The gentle and winsome tone,
That you had no time nor thought for,
  With troubles enough of your own.

The little acts of kindness,
  So easily out of mind;
These chances to be angels
  Which every one may find—
They come in night and silence,
  Each chill, reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging,
  And a blight has dropped on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
  And sorrow is all too great,
To suffer our slow compassion,
  That tarries until too late.
And it's not the thing you do, dear,
  It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you the bit of heartache
  At the setting of the sun.

—*Margaret Sangster*